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Vice Mayor George Wallace named mayor

Oct. 4, 2013 – Hampton City Council named Vice Mayor George Wallace to replace Molly Ward as mayor until an election is held, most likely in May. The vote was 5-0 with one Council member abstaining.

Ward resigned Friday to become special assistant to the president and deputy director for the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Because Wallace's appointment left the 7-member Council one member short, Council also named former Commonwealth's Attorney Linda Curtis to fill Wallace's position until the next election. The vote was 4-1 with one Council member abstaining.

Wallace is a former Hampton city manager who was first elected to Council in 2008 and re-elected in 2012. He had been vice mayor since 2008. Wallace has also served as assistant city manager in Hampton, executive director of the Southeast Tidewater Area Manpower Planning Authority in Norfolk, and deputy director of Human Affairs in Newport News.

"My pledge is to take us where we can be, as opposed to being locked in to where we are now," Wallace said after Council's vote.

Curtis served as the city's top prosecutor for 16 years before she stepped down in 2012. When she announced her retirement, Curtis said she and her husband were retiring about the same time and planned to travel and spend more time with their family.

According to the city charter, any vacancies in the offices of mayor or Council have to be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Council members - or with an appointment by Hampton Circuit Court judges if Council doesn't make an appointment within 60 days of the vacancies.

The charter goes on to say that whoever is appointed mayor - or Council member - will serve on an interim basis until an election is held. The next scheduled election is in May, and whoever is elected then would serve until 2016, when both Ward and Wallace's terms expire.

Ward, who announced her new job on Monday, is an attorney with the Hampton law firm of McDermottWard P.C. and had been mayor for five years. Before that she was city treasurer.

In her new role Ward will lead the White House engagement with mayors, county and municipal officials nationwide.